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Immigrant South Bethlehem, 1880-1910

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Immigrant South Bethlehem:

1880-1910

by

Gary Jones

A Thesis

Presented to the Graduate Committee

of Lehigh University

in Candidacy for the Degree of

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Abstract

This thesis examines the process of immigrant adaption in South Bethlehem from 1880-1910. Once an existing ethnic-occupational hierarchy and urban structure, composed of native Americans, and Irish and German immigrants, had developed by the 1880's subsequent immigrants from central, southern, and eastern Europe, had to adjust to it. As such patterns of immigrant adaption amongst later arriving groups were typified by unskilled and semiskilled labor in the iron and steel industry, residential segregation, ethnic community development, augmented families, and the struggle for home ownership. The resultant occupational hierarchy and urban structure of South Bethlehem remained largely intact until the unionization of the steel mills and war induced industrial expansion led to occupational and residential mobility in the post-war era.

Introduction

The traditional stereotype of the fate of immigrants in American cities is best exemplified in Oscar Handlin's The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that Made the American People.¹ Handlin's 1951 work portrayed immigration as a traumatic shift from a rural folk community into urban industrial society. As a consequence immigrants suffered a rapid loss of traditional culture, social breakdown, disorganization, and ultimately assimilation.²

In recent years Handlin's ghetto hypothesis has been completely revised. Immigrants are now portrayed as having been 'transplanted' rather than 'uprooted' and immigrant history has increasingly focused on the study of ethnicity.³ Instead of developing a comprehensive model to replace Handlin's discarded ghetto hypothesis, historians have produced numerous case studies of individual cities or towns.⁴ Moreover the specific

city, town, or neighborhood in which immigrants settled did make a difference. This case study will examine immigrant adaption and the resultant role of ethnicity in South Bethlehem between 1880-1910, a young, small, and heavily industrialised community created by industrialization and immigration.⁵

South Bethlehem began to develop during the 1850's and 1860's with the location of the main terminus of the Lehigh Valley Railroad and the Bethlehem Iron Company on the south bank of the Lehigh river.⁶ The early labor force of the railroad and the Iron Company, and the inhabitants of South Bethlehem, were native Americans from surrounding Pennsylvanian countryside, and immigrants from Ireland and Germany. Whereas the Americans dominated the highest occupational categories in all sectors of South Bethlehem's economy and resided in Ward 1 of the borough, the Irish were overwhelmingly semiskilled and unskilled, concentrated in the employment of the iron company and railroad, and resided in Wards 2 and 3 of the borough. The smaller number of German immigrants showed a greater proportion of white collar and skilled workers, and were slightly less concentrated in the iron company and railroad than the Irish, whilst they resided in Ward 2 in close proximity

to the native Americans. Thus by 1880 a clearly defined ethnic-occupational hierarchy and urban structure had developed to which all subsequent immigrants would have to adapt.

The influx of central, southern, and eastern European immigrants to South Bethlehem began in the 1880's and 1890's.⁷ The new immigrants adapted to the existing ethnic-occupational hierarchy and urban structure by entering unskilled and semiskilled jobs in the steel industry and settling in the newly incorporated Wards 4 and 5 of the borough. Although increasingly numerous, the new immigrants did not alter the original ethnic-occupational hierarchy or urban structure of South Bethlehem, they adjusted to it. As such, the lives of the new immigrants in South Bethlehem were typified by unskilled and semiskilled occupations in the iron and steel industry, residential segregation, ethnic community development, augmented families, and the struggle to become home owners.

In sum it was the interaction of ethnicity, occupational status, industrial employment, and urban structure at the particular time of arrival which determined patterns of immigrant adaption in South Bethlehem. Once an initial ethnic-occupational

hierarchy and urban structure had formed, all subsequent arrivals had to adapt to it. As such, different groups in the same city exhibited disparate patterns of adaptation.

The main source of information for this study will be the manuscript census for 1880, 1900, and 1910, supplemented by city directories for the period. The data for 1880 was derived from a sample of every fifth household head resident in the borough of South Bethlehem. The data for 1900 was derived from a sample of every fifth household head for the Boroughs of Fountain Hill and South Bethlehem, and for Northampton Heights, which in 1900 was a district of Lower Saucon Township. The data for 1910 was derived from a sample of every tenth household head in the manuscript census for the Boroughs of Fountain Hill, South Bethlehem, and the newly incorporated Borough of Northampton Heights. Whenever the name South Bethlehem is used in the text the area actually referred to includes Fountain Hill, South Bethlehem, and Northampton Heights. Due to the small size of the ethnic groups, whenever British, Irish and German immigrants are referred to each group includes both first and second generation immigrants unless otherwise specified. The more recent immigrants,

the Hungarians, Slovaks, Windish, Russians, Poles, Austrians and Italians, were almost entirely first generation. The eastern Europeans amongst the new immigrants will be treated as a single group. The justification for this is twofold. First, the east Europeans in South Bethlehem were simply too small numerically to allow for separate meaningful analysis. Secondly, and more importantly, the east Europeans shared many common experiences in both the Old and the New worlds, thus allowing for meaningful analysis of the group as a whole.⁸

This thesis does not purport to be a comprehensive case study of South Bethlehem. Nonetheless it will examine the process of immigrant adaption in South Bethlehem by addressing three specific areas. Chapter One will survey the development of South Bethlehem from 1880-1910, focusing on the industrial and demographic expansion of the city after 1904. Chapter two will examine how newly arriving immigrants adapted to the existing ethnic-occupational hierarchy and urban structure. Chapter three will examine the role of the family structure and home ownership in immigrant adaption. This thesis will argue that immigrant adaption to urban America was a process determined by

the interaction of ethnicity, occupation, employment, and the urban structure at their time of arrival. As such, patterns of immigrant adaption differed for immigrant groups in same city. By examining the process of immigrant adaption in South Bethlehem this study does not claim to have discovered the "cosmos in the microcosm," rather it seeks to examine immigrant adaption in a particular place and time.⁹

End Notes

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8. Michael P. Weber, 'East Europeans in Steel Towns: A Comparative Analysis,' Journal of Urban History, 11 (1985) 280-313.
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South Bethlehem: 1880-1910

In 1900 South Bethlehem, a town of 13,000 inhabitants spread out along the narrow flood plain of the Lehigh river and hedged in by South Mountain, was a steel town containing the 'small but solidly profitable' Bethlehem Steel Company.¹ Between 1904 and 1909 Charles Schwab's aggressive and innovative leadership transformed and expanded Bethlehem Steel, doubling the work force and increasing the population of the Borough of South Bethlehem by over fifty percent between 1900 and 1910. The decade from 1900 to 1910 was, therefore, one of rapid industrial and urban growth. The dramatic expansion of the steel mills stimulated the growth of the city, increasing the total population and changing the ethnic composition of the population by attracting increasing numbers of Italian, Slavic, and Austrian immigrants, supplementing the existing population of native Americans, British, Irish, and German immigrants.

As the population increased and diversified so too did the need for goods and services. Yet the city remained a steeltown with the mass of the old and new residents employed in working class occupations in the steel mills.

The origins of South Bethlehem's industrial and urban development lay in the 1850's.² In 1854 South Bethlehem was chosen as the site for the terminus of the Lehigh Valley Railroad. The direct origins of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation can be traced to the founding of the Saucona Iron Company in 1857. The founder Augustus Wolle, planned to build a blast furnace and to produce pig iron, drawing upon an iron ore deposit near Saucon Creek. However, a local attorney, Charles Brodhead, persuaded him that the venture would be more profitable if the furnace were built near the Lehigh river and if the company concentrated on producing rails for the Lehigh Valley Railroad. Wolle accepted both suggestions and the two companies provided the basis for South Bethlehem's industrial and urban development.

In 1860 the firm was incorporated as the Bethlehem Iron company and by 1861 a modern blast furnace was under construction by the Lehigh river. In 1863 the

rolling of iron rails exclusively for the Lehigh Valley Railroad began, and in the following decade the company built Bessemer furnaces for the production of steel rails. During the 1880's the Company built open hearth furnaces and undertook the production of forging and armor plate. In 1896 when the company finally ceased to produce rails, the Bessemer furnaces were dismantled. Henceforth the company would concentrate on the production of forging and armor plating.

Nonetheless the company was not as profitable as it might have been. Evidence does exist of waste and inefficiency in the firm's operations, and of an unwillingness to adopt cost-cutting methods. In 1898 Frederick W. Taylor, the controversial pioneer of scientific management, was hired to introduce a piece-rate system to replace the company's existing day-rate wage system. Taylor first directed his attention to the handling of raw materials in the Bethlehem yards. Taylor devised procedures whereby only 140 men would be needed to do the work which previously required more than 400. Taylor's work did not meet with the agreement of his employers, the Bethlehem owners. Although it was an exaggeration Taylor later wrote that "They did not wish me, as they said, to depopulate South

Bethlehem....They owned all the housing in South Bethlehem and the company stores, and when they saw we were cutting the labor force down to one-fourth, they did not want it." Nor did Taylor's employers adopt his other suggestions which promised to cut costs and increase productive efficiency. Taylor was dismissed in April 1901, immediately prior to the beginning of Charles Schwab's involvement with the company.

From 1904 to 1909 Charles Schwab transformed the company. He completely reorganized its productive facilities, continued producing armor plate and forgings, restarted the production of steel rails using the open hearth method of production, and brought the Grey beam into production. Schwab closed down and sold off unprofitable assets in order to expand and modernise in the company's profitable assets (which he placed under new management). Realising that the company was dangerously dependent on government contracts Schwab authorised a series of ongoing improvements and additions to the plant facilities. The additions to the company's plant included a crucible steel plant for making special steel alloys, a drop-forge shop for producing medium and light forgings (complimenting the company's older heavy forging facilities), a machine.

shop for manufacturing large hydraulic presses and pumps, and a rolling mill for structural shapes.

Simultaneously Schwab turned his attention to finding new sources of raw materials and making the existing sources as economical as possible. For example, in 1905 the Cuban source of Bethlehem Steel's iron ore was mechanised. Three years later the company secured a reduction in the cost of coke by signing an advantageous deal with a German firm who agreed to supply the company with coke, using coal from Bethlehem's own mines. In addition, Schwab arranged to purchase all the gas produced in the production of coke at a reduced price, thereby securing a cheap source of energy for the company.

By adding to the company's productive capacity, as well as reducing the cost of raw materials, Schwab ensured that the company could continue producing armor plate and forgings, whilst initiating the production of steel rails by the open hearth system, and introducing an entirely new product, the Grey beam. Schwab placed his reputation and the future of the company on the line when he decided to build a new \$4,500,000 rolling mill. The mill produced the new Grey beam which was to have a revolutionary impact on the design of structural steel

and the future of the Corporation. The Grey beam was a steel beam made directly from an ingot as a single section instead of welding smaller beams together. It therefore substantially reduced the cost of constructing skyscrapers. Trying to raise the money to develop the product and market it in 1907-8 tested even Schwab's entrepreneurial ability to the limit. However, by 1909 sales of the new structural steel beam and open hearth rails were more than offsetting the decline in armor and ordinance sales to the government. Between 1909 and 1911 a new mill for producing smaller steel sections was completed and the Bethlehem Steel Corporation was firmly established as the largest producer of structural steel in the eastern region of the United States. Nor did the expansion of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation cease in 1909. The labor force doubled in size every five years from 1910-1920. By 1920 Bethlehem Steel employed 20,000 people in the central Lehigh Valley.³

It was the tremendous expansion of the Steel Corporation which fueled the urban growth of South Bethlehem. Not only did the total population increase, but the ethnic composition of the city diversified. The original workforce of the Bethlehem mill and inhabitants of the city consisted mainly of native Americans from

the surrounding Pennsylvanian countryside, and Irish and German immigrants.

*

Table 1. Ethnic origin of Household Heads, South Bethlehem, 1900.

<u>Ethnic Origin</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>%</u>
Native American	304	52.2
British	13	2.2
Irish	109	18.7
German	83	14.3
Italian	11	1.9
Slavic	61	10.5
Total	582	100.0

Source: Sample Data 1900

* Ethnic origin is defined as place of Birth of parents.

Table 2. Time of Arrival for Foreign Born, South Bethlehem, 1900.

<u>Time of</u>	<u>Foreign Born</u>					
<u>Arrival</u>	<u>British</u>	<u>Irish</u>	<u>German</u>	<u>Italian</u>	<u>Slavic</u>	<u>Total</u>
Before 1880	54.4	66.7	45.8		6.8	41.6
1880-1889	36.4	23.5	39.0	40.0	35.6	32.7
1890-1894	9.1	8.6	11.9	20.0	42.4	18.6
1895-1900		1.2	3.4	40.0	15.3	7.1

Chi-Square 91.51 P .01

Source: Sample Data 1900

In 1900, prior to the expansion of the steel mills, the native Americans, Irish and German immigrants dominated the population of South Bethlehem along with small numbers of British and other western European immigrants (Table 1). Over half of the households sampled in 1900 were headed by native Americans, most of whom were probably of Pennsylvanian Dutch origin. A

further third of the sample was accounted for by Irish and German household heads. Nearly all of the British, Irish, and German immigrants in 1900 had arrived in America prior to 1890, and often prior to 1880 (Table 2).

In 1900 South Bethlehem was therefore a relatively stable community dominated by native Americans and Irish and German immigrants, most of whom had arrived in America at least ten or twenty years before 1900. The balance of the households sampled in 1900 were headed by more recent immigrants, such as the Italians and the Slavs. In contrast to the majority of the Irish, German, and British immigrants most of the Italians and Slavs had arrived in America since 1890.

Not only did the time of arrival of the immigrant groups in South Bethlehem differ, the demographic profile of such groups also varied greatly. As most immigrants to America arrived in the country at a relatively young age, in their twenties or early thirties, the newly arriving Italians and Slavs were considerably younger than the Irish and German immigrants who had arrived earlier. Whereas a majority of the British, Irish and German immigrants were over 40 years of age, over 70% of the Slavs and 60% of the

Italians were under 40 years of age. The British, German and Irish immigrants, were therefore at very different stage of the family life cycle than the Italians and Slavs (Table 3).

Table 3. Household Heads by Ethnicity and Age, South Bethlehem, 1900.

Ethnicity	<u>Age</u>					Total
	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	
Native American	21.4	28.3	23.4	16.1	10.9	52.5
British	15.4	23.1	23.1	15.4	23.1	2.2
Irish	11.1	25.9	21.3	25.9	15.7	18.7
Italian	21.4	42.9	35.7	18.3		1.9
Slavic	15.0	56.7	18.3	1.7		10.4
Number	103	168	131	102	75	579
Percentage	17.8	29.0	22.6	17.6	13.0	100.0

Chi-Square 55.63 P .04

Source: Sample Data 1900

Table 4. Ethnic Origin of Household Heads, South Bethlehem, 1910.

<u>Ethnic Origin</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Native American	154	35.3
British	14	3.2
Irish	38	8.7
Italian	14	3.2
German	57	13.1
Slavic	132	30.3
Austrian	27	6.2
Total	436	100.0

Source: Sample Data 1910

It was the expansion of the steel mill which attracted the Italian, Slavic, and later still the Austrian immigrants to South Bethlehem. As native

Americans, British, German, and to a lesser extent Irish immigrants, occupied skilled and supervisory positions in the mill the newer immigrants, especially the Slavs, came to dominate the semiskilled and unskilled jobs in the steel mill. By 1910 the ethnic balance of the population had altered (Table 4). The percentage of households sampled of native American origin had fallen drastically. The percentage of households sampled of Irish origin also declined, although the percentage of household heads of British and German origin remained relatively stable. In contrast, the number of households with Italian, Slavic and Austrian heads all increased after 1900.

Table 5. Time of Arrival for Foreign Born, South Bethlehem, 1910.

<u>Time of Arrival</u>	<u>Foreign Born</u>						<u>Total</u>
	<u>British</u>	<u>Irish</u>	<u>German</u>	<u>Italian</u>	<u>Slavic</u>	<u>Austrian</u>	
Before 1890	83.3	90.0	43.2	7.1	11.1		23.3
1890-1899	16.7	10.0	27.0	42.9	20.5	18.5	22.0
1900-1904			18.9	14.3	25.2	48.1	23.3
1905-1910			10.8	35.7	43.3	33.3	31.5

Chi-Square 111.53 P .01

Source: Sample Data 1910

The Italians, Slavs and Austrians were clearly the immigrants that had arrived most recently (Table 5). By 1910 all of the British and Irish household heads, and

70% of the German household heads sampled had arrived in America prior to 1900, and often prior to 1890. In contrast, half of the Italians, over two-thirds of the Slavs and four-fifths of the Austrians had arrived in America since 1900.

Table 6. Household Heads by Ethnicity and Age, South Bethlehem, 1910.

Ethnicity	Age					Total
	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	
Native American	15.6	35.1	20.8	17.5	11.0	35.3
British	21.4	35.7	7.1	14.3	21.4	3.2
Irish	2.6	23.7	31.6	15.8	26.3	8.7
German	10.5	29.8	33.3	14.0	12.3	13.1
Italian	21.4	42.9	35.7			3.2
Slavic	33.3	34.1	24.2	6.8	1.5	30.3
Austrian	22.2	59.3	14.8	3.7		6.2
Total	87	152	105	53	39	436

Chi-Square 74.57 P .01

Source: Sample Data 1910

The demographic differences between the various immigrant groups of South Bethlehem were maintained by the virtual halt of Irish immigration and the slowing of German immigration, and by the recent arrival of so many Italian, Slavic and Austrian immigrants. Whereas nearly two thirds of the Italian, Slavic, and Austrian immigrants were under forty years of age, the majority of the Germans, and especially the Irish, were over

forty. The native Americans were divided evenly with half under forty and half over forty years of age. As such, the timing of the arrival of immigrant groups ensured the continuation of the demographic differences between the immigrant groups of the city (Table 6).

The importance of the steel mill to South Bethlehem can be seen in the percentage of the population which was employed in the iron and steel industry (Table 7). Like Pittsburgh, Johnstown, and Steelton, South Bethlehem was dominated by the steel mill in its midst.⁴ In 1900, 59% of the household heads of South Bethlehem were directly employed in the iron and steel industry. A further 6% were employed in the transport industry, mainly by the Lehigh Valley Railroad. Nor is it surprising, with the industrial and urban growth of South Bethlehem, that just over 6% of the household heads were employed in the construction industry. In addition to steel, transportation and construction a significant apparel industry also existed in South Bethlehem.

Table 7. Industrial Employment Male Household
Heads, South Bethlehem, 1900

<u>Industry</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>%</u>
Iron and Steel	311	58.9
Construction	31	5.9
Transport	31	5.9
Apparel	24	4.5
Retail & Wholesale	91	17.2
Miscellaneous	40	7.6

Source: Sample Data 1900

Although only a small number of the household heads were employed in the apparel industry, which included a number of silk and knitting mills, the importance of the industry to the community should not be underestimated. The silk and knitting mills located in the community to utilise the pool of labor provided by immigrant women and children, often the families of immigrants employed in the steel industry. In the same fashion, immigrant women and children also labored in a number of cigar factories located in South Bethlehem. The wages of such workers helped to supplement the inadequate wages of the semiskilled and unskilled steel workers. Inevitably, goods and services had to be provided for an expanding and increasingly diverse population. Consequently almost one fifth of household heads were employed in the business and commerce, retail and wholesale sector to cater to the varied needs of the growing population of South Bethlehem.

Table 8. Industrial Employment Male Household
Heads, South Bethlehem, 1910

<u>Industry</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>%</u>
Iron and Steel	229	58.1
Construction	17	4.3
Transport	24	6.1
Apparel	21	5.3
Retail & Wholesale	57	14.5
Miscellaneous	46	11.7

Source: Sample Data 1910

During the years of Bethlehem Steel's expansion under Charles Schwab, the relative importance of the iron and steel industry in the employment of the inhabitants of South Bethlehem did not change (Table 8). In 1910 58% of the household heads in South Bethlehem were employed in the iron and steel industry. The vast majority were employed by the Bethlehem steel Corporation, although two companies, the New Jersey Zinc Company, and the Bethlehem Machine and Foundry Company were also located in the city. The balance of the household heads of the community labored in the same industries as in 1900, that is in the transport, construction, apparel, and retail and wholesale, business and commercial sectors of the economy.

Not only did the majority of the inhabitants of South Bethlehem continue to labor in the steel industry during the era from 1900-1910, they also continued to rely upon on semiskilled and unskilled occupations for their livelihood (Table 9).

Table 9. Occupational Structure, Male Household Heads, South Bethlehem, 1900

Occupational Category	No	%
High white collar	52	10.4
Low white collar	66	13.2
Skilled	85	17.0
Semiskilled & Unskilled	298	59.5

Source: Sample Data 1900

During the era under examination South Bethlehem was a blue-collar, working class, industrial community. Just over 10% of the population in 1900 were members of the high white collar occupational class, that is, they were professionals, major proprietors or managers. A slightly larger percentage of the population were in the low white collar occupational class, which included petty proprietors, managers and clerks. The remainder of the population were in the skilled, semiskilled or unskilled occupational categories. Nearly 17% were in the skilled occupational category, whilst 59% were semiskilled and unskilled, an occupational category which was composed overwhelmingly of day laborers in the steel mills.

Table 10. Occupational Structure, Male Household Heads, South Bethlehem, 1910

Occupational Category	No	%
High white collar	35	9.4
Low white collar	68	18.2
Skilled	73	19.6
Semiskilled & unskilled	197	52.8

Source: Sample Data 1910

Although South Bethlehem remained an overwhelmingly blue-collar working class industrial city in 1910, the occupational structure had altered since 1900. That is,

percentage of the population in the high white collar and the semiskilled and unskilled occupational categories declined. At the same time percentages of the population in the low white collar and skilled occupational categories increased. In 1910 18% of the population were in the low white collar occupational category, whilst the skilled occupational category included 20% of the population (Table 10).

While the increase in the size of the white collar occupational category was most likely due to the increasing business and commercial, retail and wholesale sector, the skilled occupational category is less easily explained. Most scholars have argued that although the total number of jobs in the steel industry increased during the 1890's and 1900's the proportion of skilled as opposed to semiskilled and unskilled jobs available declined.⁵ Bethlehem Steel, however, may represent an exception to overall trends. The rapid expansion and diversification of Bethlehem Steel's productive capacity may have created an increased need for skilled labor, which would explain the increase in the size of the skilled occupational category after 1900. Nonetheless the majority of the sampled heads continued to labor in semiskilled and unskilled, rather than skilled

occupations in heavy industry.

The industrial and urban origins and expansion of South Bethlehem lay in the iron and steel industry. Throughout the late nineteenth century South Bethlehem grew steadily. However, from 1904 onwards, when Charles Schwab took control of Bethlehem Steel, the city underwent a period of unprecedented industrial and urban expansion. Nonetheless the mass of the population continued to rely upon blue-collar working class occupations in heavy industry. Although occupational structure and the industrial basis of the city remained stable during the decade the ethnic composition and demographic profile of the population changed noticeably. By 1910 the population of the city consisted of four major groups: first, native Americans, many of whom were of Pennsylvania Dutch origin; second, Irish immigrants, the majority of whom had arrived in America prior to 1880 and were over forty years of age by 1910; third, German immigrants who had arrived in America slightly later than the Irish, and tended to be over forty by 1910; fourth, the Italians, Slavs, and Austrians, the majority of whom arrived in America after 1890, the vast majority of whom were under forty years of age.

The following chapter will examine patterns of residential segregation amongst the native Americans, Irish, German, and the most recently arrived immigrants, the Italians, Slavs and Austrians. That is, how the interaction of ethnicity, occupation, employment, and the urban structure at their time of arrival determined the formation, and later the transformation, of immigrant neighborhoods into ethnic communities.

End Notes.

1. Robert Hessen, "The Transformation of Bethlehem Steel, 1904-1909", Business History Review, No.3 (Autumn, 1972), 359.
2. For the following see Robert Hessen, *ibid*; Burton W. Folsom, Urban Capitalists, 112-142.
3. *Ibid*.
4. John Bodnar et al, Lives Of Their Own, 61; Ewa Morawaska, For Bread with Butter, 85; Bodnar, Industrialization and Immigration, 62-5.
5. Katherine Stone, "The Origin of Job Structures in the Steel Industry", Radical America (Nov-Dec 1973).

Occupation and Residence

The patterns of residential segregation prevalent amongst immigrant groups in South Bethlehem from the late nineteenth century until the early twentieth century were a product of the interaction of ethnicity, industrial employment, occupation, and the urban structure at their time of arrival. During the initial decades of the borough's existence, employment, occupational, and residential patterns formed amongst the native Americans, German and Irish immigrants. As such, later immigrants had to adapt to a pre-existing ethnic-occupational hierarchy and urban structure. Nonetheless, despite their different ethnic origins, their time of arrival, or whether the ethnic-occupational hierarchy and urban structure which they had to confront was still in its formative stage or

established, all of the immigrant groups adapted by establishing immigrant neighborhoods which swiftly developed into ethnic communities.

Unlike the classic steel town, Pittsburgh, the economies of smaller steel towns such as Johnstown, Steelton, and South Bethlehem were not diversified enough for different immigrant groups to cluster in completely different industries during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.¹ However, during the period from 1880-1910 the immigrants in South Bethlehem were more heavily concentrated in the iron and steel industry than were the native Americans.

Table 11. Industrial Employment by Ethnicity, Male Household Heads, South Bethlehem, 1880.

Industry	Ethnicity					Total
	Native American	British	Irish	German	Slavic	
Iron & Steel	51.2	80.0	81.4	73.3	100.0	68.7
Transport	10.5		10.0	6.7		6.0
Construction	11.6			6.7		6.6
Apparel	2.3			6.7		1.8
Business & Commerce	12.8	20.0	5.2	6.7		9.6
Miscellaneous	11.6		3.4			7.2
Percentage	51.8	3.0	34.9	9.0	1.2	100.0
Total	86	5	58	15	2	166

Chi-Square 34.19 P .02

In 1880 just over half of the native Americans labored in the production of iron and steel, with the

remainder employed in the other sectors of the city's growing economy. In contrast the Irish and German immigrants were over-represented in iron and steel. Almost three quarters of the Germans, and four-fifths of the Irish were employed in the iron and steel industry. As a result the percentage of those groups employed in the other sectors of the economy was correspondingly small (Table 11).

Despite the steady growth of South Bethlehem during the last two decades of the nineteenth century the relationship between ethnicity and industrial employment did not alter. In turn of the century South Bethlehem the percentage of the male household heads employed in the iron and steel industry remained stable at 60%. As in 1880 the native Americans continued to show the smallest percentage of any ethnic group in the iron and steel industry. Whereas half of the native Americans were thus employed, almost two-thirds of the Germans, and three-quarters of the Irish and newly arriving Slavs, were employed in the same industry. In contrast, the smaller immigrant groups, such as the British, and later arriving Italians, were less concentrated in the iron and steel industry. Only half of the Italians, and 40% of the British were employed in the production of

iron and steel. The British and Italians were more widely dispersed throughout the albeit limited economy of the city, in the apparel, transport, and construction sectors of the economy. Such a pattern of employment amongst the Italians was similiar to that found in other cities during the same era² (Table 12).

Table 12. Industrial Employment by Ethnicity, Male Household Heads, South Bethlehem, 1900

Industry	Ethnicity						Total
	Native	American	British	Irish	German	Italian	Slavic
Iron & steel	49.5	40.0	75.0	65.3	50.0	76.7	58.9
Construction	8.9		1.1	4.2	20.0		5.9
Transport	8.9		2.3	4.2			5.9
* Apparel	3.9	10.0	1.1	9.7	20.0	1.7	4.5
Retail & wholesale	21.7	20.0	9.1	8.3	10.0	18.3	17.2
Miscellaneous	7.1	20.0	11.4	8.3		3.3	7.3

Chi-Square 72.71 P .01

Source: Sample Data 1900

The tremendous industrial and demographic expansion after 1904 did not alter the well established relationship between ethnicity and industrial employment. In 1910 the relationship between ethnicity and industry continued, and the percentage of household heads employed in the iron and steel industry remained stable. Although the total percentage of both natives and immigrants employed in the iron and steel industry

declined, the immigrants continued to be more heavily concentrated in the industry than did the native Americans. In sum, throughout the period from 1880-1910 the economy of South Bethlehem was dominated by the production of iron and steel, and the resultant employment opportunities continued to attract successive waves of immigrants, such as the Irish and Germans in the late nineteenth century and the Italians, Slavs, and Austrians of the early twentieth century (Table 13).

Table 13. Industrial Employment by Ethnicity, Male Household Heads, South Bethlehem, 1910.

Industry	<u>Ethnicity</u>							
	Native American	Bri-	tish	Irish	German	Italian	Slavic	Aust-rian Total
Iron & Steel	45.6	33.3	63.3	54.0	25.0	74.8	70.4	58.1
Construction	7.4		3.3	4.0	25.0	1.0		4.3
Transport	8.8	16.7	6.7	2.0		5.5		6.1
Apparel	5.9			14.0	8.3	2.4	7.4	5.3
Retail & Wholesale	19.9	16.7	10.0	10.0	41.7	10.2	7.4	14.5
Miscellaneous	12.5	33.3	16.7	16.0		6.3	14.8	11.7

Chi-Square 77.72 P .01

Source: Sample Data 1910

Despite the fact that both native Americans and other ethnic groups resided in the same city, and most often worked in the same industry, they by no means shared the same work experience. In South Bethlehem, as in other nineteenth and early twentieth century

industrial towns and cities, a clearly discernable hierarchy existed between ethnicity and occupation.³ In 1880 the native Americans of South Bethlehem displayed a higher percentage of white collar workers than any other group in the city. It was the Americans that were the owners, managers and superintendents that ran the Bethlehem Iron Company and the Lehigh Valley Railroad, and dominated the business and commercial community of South Bethlehem. Along with the German immigrants, the native Americans also displayed the highest percentage of workers in the skilled occupational category. In comparison, the Irish were overwhelmingly day laborers employed by the Bethlehem Iron Company and Lehigh Valley Railroad, and as such dominated the semiskilled and unskilled occupational categories (Table 14).

Table 14. Occupational Category by Ethnicity, Male Household Heads, South Bethlehem, 1880.

Occupation	Ethnicity					Total
	Native American	British	Irish	German	Slavic	
High white collar	7.6	20.0				4.2
Low white collar	10.5		5.2	6.7		7.8
Skilled	23.3	40.0	1.7	26.7	50.0	16.9
Semiskilled & unskilled	59.3	40.0	93.7	66.7	50.0	71.1
Number	86	5	58	15	2	166
Percentage	51.8	3.0	34.9	9.0	1.2	100.0

Chi-Square 29.71 P .01

During the period from 1880 to 1900 the ethnic-occupational hierarchy remained largely unchanged. Native Americans and Germans continued to dominate the white collar and skilled occupational categories, whilst improving their representation in the high white collar category. Below the native Americans and Germans were the Irish and newly arriving Slavs, who although present in the white collar and skilled occupational categories, dominated the semiskilled and unskilled occupational categories. As in industrial employment, the smaller immigrant groups, the British and Italians, showed distinctive patterns when compared to the other ethnic groups. Although neither the British nor Italians were present in the high white collar category, both groups were well represented in the low white collar and skilled occupational categories (Table 15).

Table 15. Occupational Category by Ethnicity, Male Household Heads, South Bethlehem, 1900.

Occupational Category	Ethnicity						Total
	Native American	British	Irish	German	Italian	Slavic	
High white collar	13.8		9.8	6.3		3.4	10.4
Low white collar	16.0	40.0	3.7	7.8	20.0	11.9	13.2
Skilled	22.3	10.0	3.7	25.0	20.0	3.4	17.0
Semiskilled & unskilled	48.0	50.0	82.9	60.9	60.0	81.4	59.9

Chi-Square 65.91 P .01

Source: Sample Data 1900

The occupational structure of the city remained largely intact between 1904 and 1910. As in 1900, the native Americans and Germans continued to exhibit the highest proportion of any ethnic group in the white collar occupational categories. By 1910 nearly 40% of the native Americans sampled were in the white collar occupational categories. Since 1900 German representation in both the skilled and white collar occupational categories had increased. Below the native Americans and Germans were the Irish, Slavic, and Austrian immigrants. Although there was a modest increase in Irish representation in the low white collar and skilled occupational categories the majority of the Irish remained in the lowest occupational category, alongside the Slavs and newly arriving Austrians (Table 16).

Table 16. Occupational Category by Ethnicity, Male Household Heads, South Bethlehem, 1910

Occupational Category	Ethnicity							Total
	Native American	British	Irish	German	Italian	Slavic	Austrian	
High white collar	17.1	18.2	7.7	6.5	18.2	3.3		9.4
Low white collar	22.5	36.4	23.1	19.6	36.4	10.6	11.1	18.2
Skilled	22.5	18.2	7.7	28.3	18.2	16.3	18.5	19.6
Semiskilled & unskilled	38.0	27.3	61.5	45.7	27.3	69.9	70.1	52.8

Chi-Square 50.41 P .01

Source: Sample Data 1910

Clearly the continued industrial growth of South Bethlehem between its origins in the 1860's and the early twentieth century was based upon the production of iron and steel. Opportunities for employment in alternative industries, or indeed with alternative companies were extremely limited. Moreover, it was the interaction of ethnicity, occupation, and industrial employment which helped determine patterns of residential segregation, and ultimately ethnic neighborhood and community development. By 1880 native American, German and Irish neighborhoods and communities had already begun to emerge. Consequently, the later arriving Italian, Slavic, and Austrian immigrants had to adapt to a pre-existing ethnic-occupational hierarchy and urban structure.

The Borough of South Bethlehem covered the flood plain of Lehigh river and slopes of South Mountain. The flood plain of the river was crossed by First, Second and Third streets, which were covered by railroad tracks, industrial establishments, and the business and commercial district. Higher up the slopes of South Mountain the borough was dominated by residential areas and the campus of Lehigh University. In 1880 the borough consisted of three wards. Ward 1 was bounded by

the Lehigh and Northampton County boundry in the west and Wyandotte street in the east. Ward 2 was bounded by New street in the east, while the boundry of Ward 3 and the Borough ran along Polk street. In 1880 Wards 1 and 2 were not only dominated by native Americans and Germans, but also contained over 90% of the total number of those two groups. In contrast 98% of Irish immigrants in South Bethlehem resided in Wards 2 and 3 (Tables 17 and 18).

Table 17. Proportion of Ethnic groups present by area of Residence, South Bethlehem, 1880.

<u>Ward of South Bethlehem</u>				
<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Ward 1</u>	<u>Ward 2</u>	<u>Ward 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
Native Americans	58.1	34.9	7.0	51.8
British	60.0	40.0		3.0
Irish	1.7	50.0	48.3	34.9
German	13.3	80.0	6.7	9.0
Slavic	100.0			1.2
Percentage	34.9	44.0	21.1	100.0
Number	58	74	35	166

Chi-Square 75.71 P .01

Table 18. Ethnicity by Residence, South Bethlehem, 1880.

<u>Ward of South Bethlehem</u>				
<u>Ethnic group</u>	<u>Ward 1</u>	<u>Ward 2</u>	<u>Ward 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
Native Americans	86.2	41.1	17.1	51.8
British	5.2	2.7		3.0
Irish	1.7			34.9
German	3.4	16.4	2.9	9.0
Slavic	3.4	2.9		1.2
Percentage	34.9	44.0	21.1	100.0
Number	58	73	35	166

Chi-Square 75.71 P .01

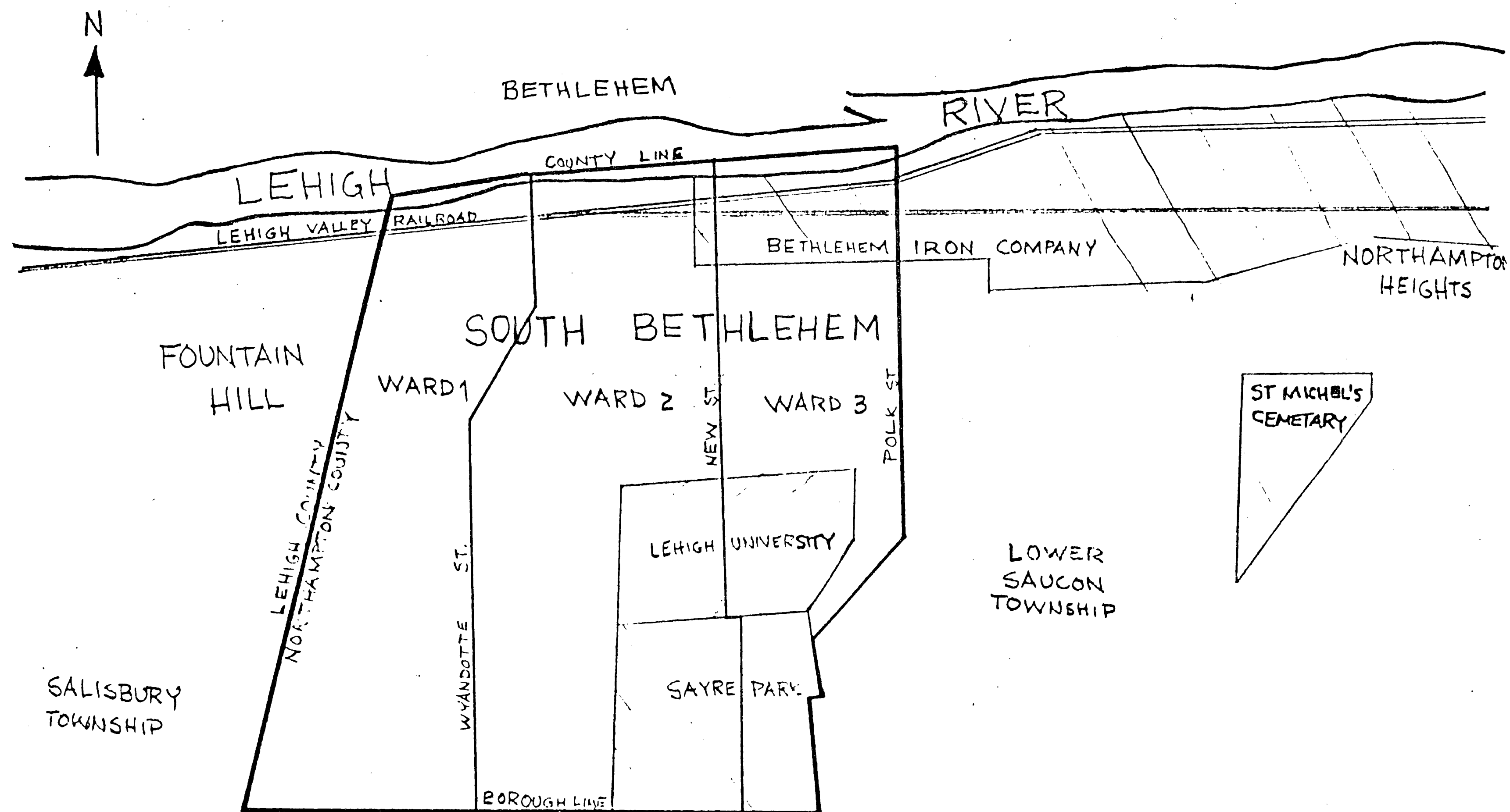


Figure 1. Borough of South Bethlehem and Surrounding Areas, 1880.

Although use of both the term and concept of neighborhoods is problematic, by 1880 immigrant neighborhoods and thus ethnic communities had begun to coalesce based on shared origins, employment patterns, occupational status, and residence.⁴ In 1865 the elite residents of nearby Fountain Hill, which in 1880 was part of Salisbury Township, built the Episcopalian Church of the Nativity on the corner of Wyandotte and Third Streets in Ward 1. In Ward 2, which contained four-fifths of the sampled German immigrants, St. Peter's Reformed Lutheran Church was erected in 1863 on the corner of Packard Avenue and Vine Street. Until 1919 German remained the only language used in services at St. Peter's, and it was not until 1938 that German language services were finally abolished.⁵ The fact that the majority of the German immigrants in South Bethlehem resided in Ward 2 in close proximity to the majority of the native Americans may be due to the Pennsylvania Dutch origin of the native Americans. As one contemporary observer stated, 'It takes but a short time to twist their German into a sense of local vernacular. The work of amalgamation between the two tongues is rapid and very often nearly complete.'⁶ Furthermore, the German immigrants do not seem to have

developed independent fraternal associations, preferring instead to join those frequented by native Americans.⁷

At the same time that the Germans were establishing St. Peters Lutheran Church, the Irish residents in Ward 3 established the Church of the Holy Infancy on the corner of Fourth and Polk Streets. In 1894 a parochial school was added to the church. During the same era the Irish immigrants in South Bethlehem also established various fraternal associations, such as the Emerald Benefical Association and the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and engaged actively in local politics and borough government.⁸

In summary, by 1880 native Americans dominated the white collar and skilled occupational categories in all sectors of the borough's economy. At the same time they resided in Fountain Hill and Wards 1 and 2 of South Bethlehem itself. The Germans, who were also well represented in the white collar and skilled occupational categories, although more concentrated in the iron company and railroad, clustered in Ward 2. The Irish, who were lowest in the ethnic-occupational hierarchy and almost exclusively concentrated in the employ of the iron company and railroad, resided in Wards 2 and 3 of the borough. Clearly the intersection of immigration

and industrialization in South Bethlehem had not led to the assimilation of the Irish or German immigrants. Rather than waning, ethnic community life had intensified, being based upon shared origins, employment patterns, occupational status, and residence. In the process, the Irish and Germans in South Bethlehem had managed to achieve some measure of independence and autonomy despite the handicaps of their working class and immigrant status.

The continued growth of South Bethlehem during the 1880's and 1890's led to the extension of the borough. After 1880, the area from Polk Street to Atlantic Street was annexed from Lower Saucon Township, and was subsequently designated as Ward 4. After 1890 the borough was again extended with the annexation of the area from Atlantic Street to St. Michael's Cemetery. The area was later designated as Ward 5. Still further to the east, Northampton Heights remained part of Lower Saucon Township until its incorporation as an independent borough in 1910. The continued growth of the native American, Irish, and German communities during the last two decades of the century, and the arrival of increasing numbers of southern, central, and eastern Europeans in South Bethlehem led to the

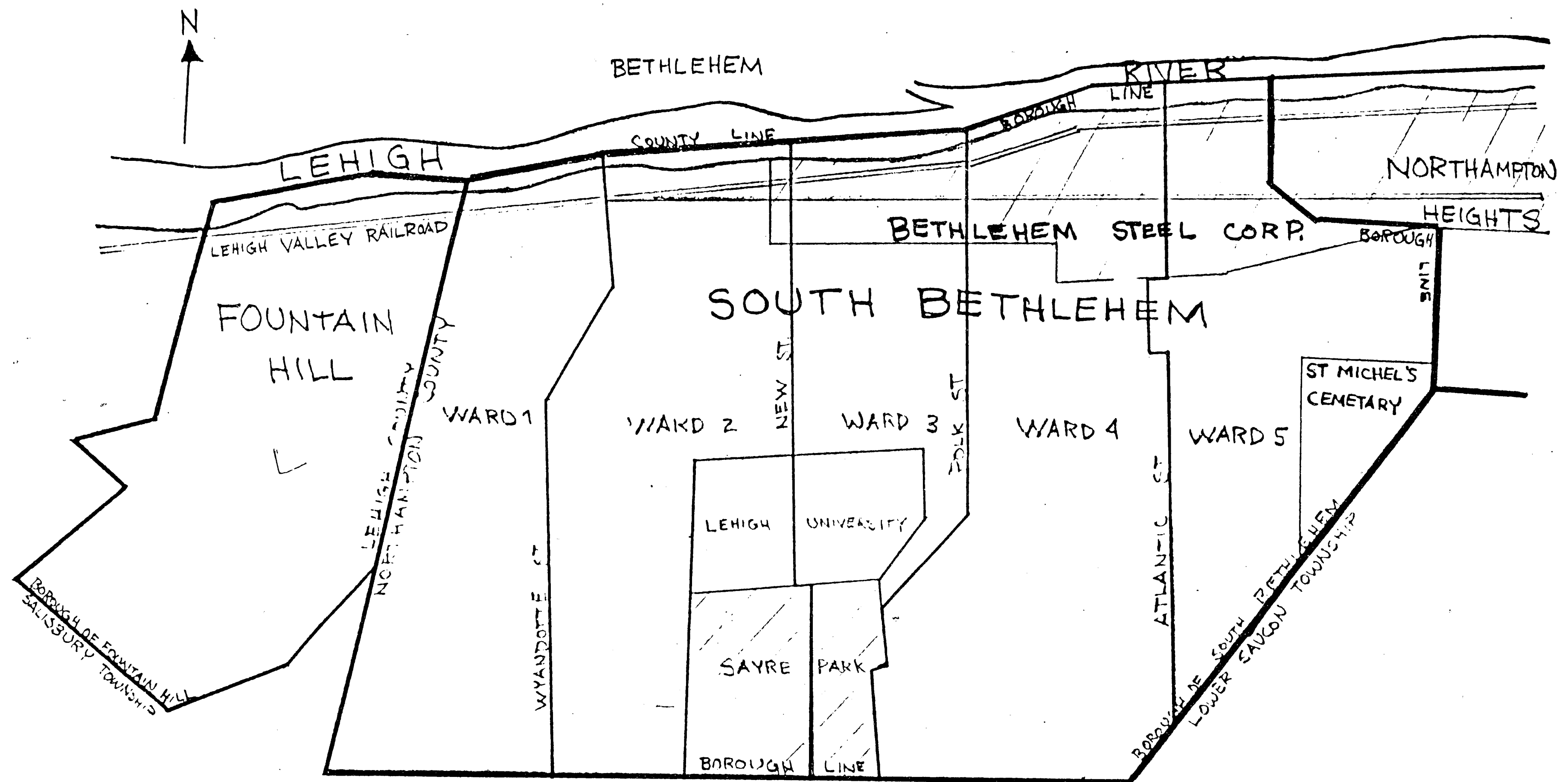


Figure 2. Borough of South Bethlehem and Surrounding Areas, 1900-1910.

development of new neighborhoods in the area to the east of Polk Street both before and after the incorporation of the area into the borough.

Table 19. Proportion of Ethnic groups present by area of Residence, South Bethlehem, 1900.

Ethnicity	Fountain Ward of South Bethlehem						Northampton	
	Hill	1	2	3	4	5	Heights	Total
Native Americans	10.2	26.3	27.0	16.8	4.3	7.9	7.6	52.2
British	15.4	30.8	30.8	15.4	7.7			2.2
Irish	1.0	9.2	1.0	22.9	47.7	18.3		18.7
German	10.8	14.5	30.1	15.7	14.5	14.5		14.3
Italian	18.2			36.4	27.3	18.2		1.9
Slavic		6.6	3.3	23.0	47.5	19.7		10.5
Percentage	7.7	18.9	19.6	18.9	18.9	12.0	4.0	100.0
Number	45	110	114	110	110	70	23	582

Chi-Square 238.07 P .01

Source: Sample Data 1900

Table 20. Ethnicity by Residence, South Bethlehem, 1900.

Ethnicity	Fountain Ward of South Bethlehem						Northampton	
	Hill	1	2	3	4	5	Heights	Total
Native Americans	68.9	72.2	71.9	46.4	11.8	34.3	100.0	52.2
British	4.4	3.6	3.5	1.8	1.0			2.2
Irish	2.2	9.1	1.0	22.7	47.3	28.6		18.7
German	20.0	10.9	21.9	11.8	10.9	17.1		14.3
Italian	4.4			3.6	2.7	2.9		1.9
Slavic		3.6	1.8	12.7	26.4	17.1		10.5
Percentage	7.7	18.9	19.6	18.9	18.9	12.0	4.0	100.0
Number	45	110	114	110	110	70	23	582

Chi-Square 238.07 P .01

Source: Sample Data 1900

Adapting to the existing ethnic-occupational

hierachy and urban structure, the new immigrants were concentrated in semiskilled and unskilled occupations in the steel industry and clustered in the new wards (4 and 5). The original wards of the borough continued to be dominated by native Americans, Germans, and to a lesser extent the Irish, who had spread into Ward 4 during the 1880's and 1890's. In 1900 a majority of native Americans and Germans resided in the original wards of the borough, wards 1, 2, and 3, where they also constituted an absolute majority of the residents in those areas. In addition, Northampton Heights, separated by St. Michael's Cemetery and railroad tracks from Ward 5, was entirely native American (Tables 19 and 20). During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century increasing numbers of central, eastern and southern Europeans began to arrive in South Bethlehem. Their shared origins, employment patterns, occupational status, and residence led to the development of immigrant neighborhoods, and ultimately ethnic communities. The first Slovaks arrived in South Bethlehem during the late 1870's and were soon augmented by their fellow countrymen who drifted south from the Pennsylvania coal regions. Through a contact named Dr. Brauner, a Bohemian, the Slovaks secured employment

at the iron works. By 1891 the Roman Catholic Slovaks in South Bethlehem established the Parish of St. Cyril and Methodius. By 1915 a parochial school with an enrollment of 400 pupils had been established, as had two fraternal associations, the National Hall and the Catholic Sokol Hall (on Thomas Street).⁹

During the 1880's the Magyars began to arrive. Amongst the earliest Magyar immigrants to arrive were men such as Michael Orasz, Stephen Vasil and John Boszormenyi. According to a 1915 local source the Magyars thrived, building homes, churches, schools, and organizing societies. In 1902 the Roman Catholic Magyars established the St. John's Capestrian Church and in 1905 the protestant Magyars established the first Hungarian Reformed church. By 1915 most Magyars were employed in the steel works or were in business. The Italian immigrants in South Bethlehem, like the Magyars, had begun to arrive in the 1880's. Amongst the new comers in 1885 were Chas Vito, Antony Madeline and Louis and Anthony Castellucci. According to a 1915 source, the Italians entered into all town activities, often enagaging in business, a pursuit in which a great many prospered, enabling them to build their own homes in the east of South Bethlehem. By 1902 the Italians

established the parish of Our Lady of Pompeii of the Holy Rosary, as well as a number of fraternal associations.¹⁰

In 1905 the Poles, who also began to arrive in the 1880's, established the St. Stanislaus Parish and other fraternal associations including a branch of the National Polish Sokol. Amongst the latest of the central and eastern Europeans to arrive in Bethlehem were the Windish or Slovenes. One of the first Windish men to arrive was Joseph Preletz in 1893. After a year's stay, Preletz returned to Hungary, only to return accompanied by S. Shamenek and others in the following year. In 1912 the Windish established the First South Bethlehem Windish Sick and Benefical Society. Soon after, a Windish fraternal Hall was established on Packer Avenue adjacent to the Lehigh University sports grounds in Ward 3. By 1913 the Roman Catholic Windish had established the Parish of St. Joseph, and a year later the Lutheran Windish established St. John's Windish Lutheran Church.¹¹

As a consequence of such heavy in-migration, by 1900 the wards closest to the mill took on an increasingly multi-ethnic immigrant identity as a majority of the Irish, Italian, and Slavic immigrants were concentrated

in Wards 3, 4, and 5. Just as the native Americans and Germans dominated the areas in which they resided, by 1900 the Irish, Italians, and Slavs made up a majority of Ward 4 and nearly half of Ward 5. The later arriving immigrants concentrated in the newer Wards, 4 and 5, because they were less densely populated and built up than the older Wards, 1, 2, and 3. Moreover, the proximity of those wards to the main entrance of the Bethlehem mills ensured that the semiskilled and unskilled immigrant steel workers minimised the journey to work. In contrast, the white collar and skilled native Americans and Germans could afford the time and money necessary to pay for the daily street car journey to and from their source of employment.

During the years from 1900 to 1910 the population of South Bethlehem increased substantially. However, the increase was unevenly distributed throughout the city. Specifically, Wards 3, 4, and 5 expanded far more rapidly than did the remainder of the Borough of South Bethlehem, Fountain Hill, and Northampton Heights. The population of those Wards increased by 40%, 85%, and 110% respectively.¹² As a consequence of the population increase, when the most suitable land for housing had been exhausted, the housing stock of the two wards began

to encroach upon the steep gradients of South Mountain, producing an area dominated by smoke stacks, church steeples, and steeply terraced row homes.

Table 21. Proportion of Ethnic groups present in areas of Residence, South Bethlehem, 1910.

Ethnicity	<u>Fountain Ward of South Bethlehem Northampton</u>							Total
	Hill	1	2	3	4	5	Heights	
Native Americans	13.0	25.3	24.0	13.0	6.5	7.1	11.0	35.5
British	14.3	28.6	7.1	28.6	14.3	7.1		3.2
Irish		7.9	15.8	28.9	26.3	15.8	5.3	8.7
German	10.5	31.6	28.1	7.0	5.3	12.3	5.3	13.1
Italian				50.0	28.6	21.4		3.2
Slavic	1.5	2.3	3.8	21.2	51.5	19.7		30.3
Austrian	3.7	7.4	7.4	18.5	11.1	51.9		6.2
Percentage	7.1	15.8	15.4	18.1	22.9	15.6	5.0	100.0
Number	31	69	67	79	100	68	22	436

Chi-Square 234.06 P .01

Source: Sample Data 1910

Table 22. Ethnicity by Residence, South Bethlehem, 1910.

Ethnicity	<u>Fountain Ward of South Bethlehem Northampton</u>							Total
	Hill	1	2	3	4	5	Heights	
Native Americans	64.5	56.5	55.2	25.3	6.5	16.2	77.3	35.3
British	6.5	5.8	1.5	5.1	2.0	7.1		3.2
Irish		4.3	9.0	13.9	10.0	8.8	9.1	8.7
German	19.4	26.1	23.9	5.1	3.0	10.9	13.6	13.6
Italian				8.9	4.0	4.4		3.2
Slavic	6.5	4.3	7.5	35.4	68.0	38.2		15.7
Austrian	3.2	2.9	3.0	6.3	3.0	20.6		6.2
Percentage	7.1	15.8	15.4	18.1	22.9	15.6	5.0	100.0
Number	31	69	67	79	100	68	22	436

Chi-Square 234.06 P .01

Source: Sample Data 1910

The distribution of natives and immigrants in 1910

remained largely unchanged from 1900 (Tables 21 and 22). The majority of native Americans and Germans resided in Fountain Hill and Wards 1-3, whilst a majority of the Irish and Slavs continued to reside in Wards 3 and 4. In a similar fashion, over half of the newly arriving Austrians resided in Ward 5. However, in the intervening years the Slavs had replaced the Irish as the largest single immigrant group in the city as a whole and in Ward 4.

In sum, by 1910 South Bethlehem exhibited patterns of residential segregation which had their origins in the late nineteenth century. Although some members of every ethnic group resided in almost all areas of the city, the majority displayed patterns of concentration rather than dispersion. The immigrants of South Bethlehem, be they the Irish and Germans who arrived in the late nineteenth century, or the Italians, Slavs, and Austrians who arrived in the early twentieth century, adapted to their environment not by assimilating into the American mainstream, but by forging ethnic communities based on their common origins, employment patterns, occupational status, and residence.

End Notes

1. Olivier Zunz, The Changing Face of Inequality, 39; Bodnar et al, Lives of Their Own, 61; Ewa Morawaska, For Bread with Butter, 85; Bodnar, Industrialization and Immigration, 62-5.
2. Bodnar et al, Lives of Their Own, 144-5.
3. Olivier Zunz, The Changing Face of Inequality, 37, 221; Bodnar et al, Lives of Their Own, 61; Ewa Morawaska, For Bread with Butter, 101; Bodnar, Industrialization and Immigration, 62-5.
4. Olivier Zunz, The Changing Face of Inequality, 21.
5. Historical Souvenir of St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1963, 102.
6. W. Ross Yates, History of the Lehigh Valley Region, Bethlehem, 1963, 102.
7. City Directories; Semi-Centennial: The Borough of South Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; Souvenir History, South Bethlehem, PA, 1915. In neither source were fraternal associations with an explicitly German name listed.
8. W. Ross-Yates et al, Bethlehem of Pennsylvania, 124-9.
9. Souvenir History; Mark Stolarik, Growing up on the Southside, 44-63.
10. Souvenir History.
11. Ibid.
12. Census of Population 1900, Vol. 1, 345; Census of Population 1910, Vol. 3, 548.
13. For the political conflict between the Slovak ethnic group and the Irish for control of the Democratic party apparatus in Ward 4 of South Bethlehem during the 1920's see Mark Stolarik, Growing up on the Southside, 99-105.

Family and Home Ownership

Just as ethnic community development was the result of ethnicity, occupation, and the urban structure at the time of their arrival, so too were family structure and rate of home ownership. During the early decades of the borough's existence neither natives nor immigrants typically augmented their families with boarders. However, the industrial and demographic expansion of South Bethlehem may have intensified the shortage of suitable housing, and hence led to an increase in the practise of taking in boarders amongst all members of the community. Taking in boarders could be used to help supplement the family income, as in the case of the young, recently arriving Italians, Slavs, or Austrians, or to help pay the mortgage of home owners, as in the case of the earlier arriving and older Irish or German immigrants, or indeed natives. As such the family and

home ownership played a crucial role in immigrant adaptation, and ultimately served as the basis for the development of ethnic communities.

In South Bethlehem both native and immigrant families proved resilient under the stress and trauma which accompanied existence in a small, young, heavily industrialised community.¹ In order to examine the family structure amongst both natives and immigrants in South Bethlehem from 1880-1910 families were divided into three types, nuclear, extended and augmented. A nuclear family consisted of one or both parents and their children alone; an extended family included other relatives; whilst an augmented family was one including one or more individuals labelled as boarders by the Federal Census, regardless of whether or not they were related to the family or household head.² In 1880, twenty years after the incorporation of the borough, 77% of the families examined were nuclear in structure, a further 19% were extended in structure, whilst only 4% were augmented, containing, on average, only two boarders. Clearly, the practise of keeping boarders was rare.

However, by 1900 the proportion of the families in

the community which were augmented in structure had increased substantially. The explanation may lie in the demographic expansion which accompanied the continued industrial development of South Bethlehem. Despite the addition of two new wards to the borough between 1880 and 1900 the population increase may have out run the supply of suitable housing. As a consequence the practise of boarding, amongst all members of the community regardless of ethnicity, may have increased accordingly.

Table 23. Family Structure by Ethnicity, 1900.

<u>Family</u>	<u>Ethnicity</u>						<u>Total</u>
	<u>Native</u>	<u>American</u>	<u>British</u>	<u>Irish</u>	<u>German</u>	<u>Italian</u>	<u>Slavic</u>
Nuclear	73.4	61.5	78.0	75.9	54.5	68.9	73.5
Extended	15.5	38.5	12.8	15.7	9.1	6.6	14.5
Augmented	11.2		9.2	8.4	36.4	24.6	12.0
Number	304	13	109	83	11	61	100.0

Chi-Square 26.62 P .01

Table 24. Mean number of Boarders per Household where present, by Ethnicity, 1900.

<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>St.Dev</u>	<u>Cases</u>
Native American	1.94	1.87	34
Irish	1.40	.69	10
German	1.28	.75	7
Italian	3.75	4.85	4
Slavic	4.33	3.63	15
Total	2.41	2.60	70

Analysis of Variance .01

Source: Sample Data 1900

As Table 23 shows, whilst nearly 88% of the families sampled were nuclear or extended in structure the percentage of augmented families had increased from 4% in 1880 to 12% in 1900. In addition to the general increase in augmented families the prevalence of this family structure varied greatly by ethnicity. It was the most recent immigrants, the Italians and Slavs, who demonstrated the smallest percentage of nuclear and extended, and the highest percentage of augmented families. Just over one third of the Italian, and one quarter of the Slavic households were augmented in structure, and each contained an average of four boarders. Ironically, the fact that large numbers of Slavs resided in supervised company housing, especially in Ward 4, probably lowered the overall rate of augmented families amongst the group.³ In comparison, approximately one tenth of the German, Irish, and native American families were augmented in structure, and contained an average of between one and two boarders (Table 24).

The doubling of the labor force of Bethlehem Steel after 1904, and the 50% increase in the population of the borough by 1910, would have intensified any existing

housing shortage in South Bethlehem. Such a scenario may help explain the increase in the percentage of augmented families from 12% to 21%, as well as the increase in the average number of boarders from two to four. The Italians, Slavs, and the newly arriving Austrians, exhibited the highest percentage of augmented households. In contrast to the native Americans, Germans and Irish, just over one quarter of the Austrian, between one quarter and one third of the Italian families, and just over one third of the Slavic families were augmented in structure (Table 25).

Table 25. Family Structure by Ethnicity, 1910.

Family Structure	Ethnicity							Total
	American Native	British	Irish	German	Italian	Slavic	Aust-rian	
Nuclear	72.2	92.9	75.7	70.2	35.7	59.8	66.7	67.8
Extended	13.6	7.1	13.5	14.0	35.7	3.8	7.4	10.8
Augmented	13.6		10.8	15.8	28.6	36.4	25.9	21.4
Number	154	14	37	57	14	48	27	435

Chi-Square 46.59 P .01

Source: Sample Data 1910

Not only did they display the highest percent of augmented families, they also continued to contain the highest average number of boarders. In 1910 the Italians contained an average of three, the Austrians four, and the Slavs five boarders (Table 26).

Table 26. Mean number of Boarders per Household where
present, by Ethnicity, 1910

<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>St.Dev</u>	<u>Cases</u>
Native American	1.76	2.23	21
Irish	2.75	1.70	4
German	1.77	1.09	9
Italian	3.25	2.21	4
Slavic	5.00	5.29	48
Austrian	4.28	2.75	7
Total	3.73	4.29	93

Analysis of Variance .04

Source: Sample Data 1910

The proportion of immigrant families that were augmented in structure, and the average number of boarders they contained, varied in relation to the number of years in America and age. Given the sheer recency of arrival, youth, and the semiskilled and unskilled character of the Slavic and Austrian immigrants of South Bethlehem, it is hardly surprising they resorted to boarding in order to bolster their precarious economic position in their new environment. In addition to financial advantages of keeping boarders Household and family heads may have sought to aid the most recently arriving family, kin, or merely members of the same ethnic group. Nonetheless, it is unlikely the supplementary income obtained from boarding was used to

help retire mortgages. In contrast, the older and earlier arriving Irish and German immigrants displayed the highest rates of home ownership in South Bethlehem and may have utilised the extra income from boarders to retire their mortgages.

Despite variations in the rate of home ownership and arguments that home ownership was inferior to other investments for most of the century after 1830, ownership of a home was a goal commonly aspired to in turn of the century America amongst both natives and immigrants.⁴ Historical scholarship has shown that home ownership was less of an exclusively middle class, native, suburban phenomenon and more of a working class, immigrant, urban phenomenon.⁵

The patterns of home ownership in turn of the century South Bethlehem conform to the findings of recent studies. Table 27 shows home ownership by ethnicity in South Bethlehem for 1900. The overall rate of home ownership in South Bethlehem in 1900 was just over one quarter. Home ownership, however, varied greatly by ethnicity. Over one third of the Irish and German household heads sampled were home owners, but only one quarter of the native Americans sampled were

home owners. Furthermore, amongst the Slavic household heads sampled only one tenth reported owning their own homes, whilst none of the British or Italian households sampled were home owners.

Table 27. Home Ownership by Ethnicity, South Bethlehem, 1900.

Ethnicity	Owned	
	No	%
Native American	79	26.0
Irish	43	39.4
Germans	29	34.9
Slavs	6	9.6
Total	157	27.0

Chi-Square 29.36 P .01

Source: Sample Data 1900

By 1910 the rates of home ownership amongst all ethnic groups in the community had increased. However, the German and Irish still exhibited the highest, and Slavs and Austrians the lowest levels (Table 28).

Table 28. Home Ownership by Ethnicity, South Bethlehem, 1910.

Ethnicity	Owned	
	No	%
Native American	50	32.5
British	5	35.7
Irish	15	39.5
German	27	47.4
Italian	4	28.6
Slavic	19	14.4
Austrian	4	14.8
Total	159	27.0

Chi-Square 29.15 P .01

Source: Sample Data 1910

As already intimated home ownership was not determined by ethnicity alone. Age also affected rates of home ownership.⁶ Due to the high down payments and short term mortgages at the turn of the century (the self amortizing mortgage was rare until the 1930's) ownership was more frequent amongst older age groups than the younger ones. As Table 29 shows, rates of home ownership increased greatly from the earliest to the later age groups in 1900. The fact that the majority of the Italians, Slavs and Austrians were under 50 years of age, and the majority of the Irish and Germans were over 50 clearly influenced their respective rates of home ownership. In addition it is clear that when age was controlled for Irish and German household heads showed a higher propensity for home ownership than did native Americans.

Table 29. Home Ownership by Age, 1910.

Age	Ethnic group		
	Native American ¹	Slavic ²	Total ³
20-29	12.5		5.7
30-39	33.3	17.8	27.6
40-49	15.6	31.3	28.6
50-59	51.9		41.5
60+	58.8	50.0	64.1
Total	32.5	14.4	28.4
Number	50	19	124

¹ Chi-Square 18.53 P .01

² Chi-Square 18.76 P .01

³ Chi-Square 50.88 P .01

Source: Sample Data 1910

A third factor which helped determine the rate of home ownership was occupational status.⁷ As Table 30 shows, in both 1900 and 1910, home ownership was higher amongst the white collar and skilled occupational categories than amongst the semiskilled and unskilled. Nonetheless ownership rates of approximately 20% amongst the semiskilled and unskilled working class were not inconsiderable. In addition, when the rate of ownership amongst native Americans and immigrants in the same occupational category was examined, the immigrants, especially the Germans and Irish, displayed a higher propensity towards ownership than did the native Americans. Unfortunately, given the small number of cases in certain cells the findings were not statistically significant.

Table 30. Home Ownership by Occupation, South
Bethlehem, 1900 & 1910

<u>Occupational</u> <u>Category</u>	<u>% Owned</u>	
	1900	1910
High white collar	48.1	48.6
Low white collar	34.8	38.5
Skilled	27.1	32.4
Semiskilled & unskilled	19.2	19.3

Chi Square 1900 29.37 P .01

Chi Square 1910 21.38 P .01

Source: Sample Data 1900 & 1910

Amongst foreign born immigrant groups, the disparities in the rate of ownership can be partially explained by their respective times of arrival.⁸

Foreign born immigrants in South Bethlehem were usually in their twenties or early thirties when they first came to America. Consequently, it is not surprising that the younger and more recently arrived immigrants, the Italians, Slavs and Austrians, displayed lower rates of home ownership than did the Irish and Germans who had arrived in America at a similiar age but at an earlier time.

Table 31. Home Ownership by Time of Arrival for all Immigrants and Slavs, South Bethlehem, 1900

Time of Arrival	Owned	
	Slavs ¹	Total ²
Before 1880	50.0	44.7
1880-1889	9.5	23.0
1890-1894	4.0	4.8
1895-1900	11.0	6.3
Percentage	10.2	27.4
Number	6	62

¹ Chi-Square 8.0 P .04

² Chi-Square 29.23 P .01

Source: Sample Data 1900

As a result, few of the Italians, Slavs and Austrians, had resided in America long enough to accumulate the

capital necessary for the heavy down payments and short term repayment schedule necessary to obtain and retire a mortgage. In South Bethlehem rates of home ownership were highest amongst those foreign born immigrants who had arrived earliest, while the lowest was amongst those who had arrived most recently (Table 31). By 1900, 45% of those immigrants who had arrived prior to 1880 were homeowners. Of those immigrants who arrived between 1880 and 1889, only 23% percent were home owners by 1900; while amongst those immigrants that had arrived in America after 1890 the rate of ownership fell to 5%. Unfortunately when the rate of ownership for individual foreign born groups was examined by time of arrival only the findings for the Slavs were significant. Nonetheless, the earlier the Slavic immigrants had arrived in America, the more likely they were to have become home owners by 1900.

The relationship between time of arrival and home ownership did not alter between 1900 and 1910. Table 32 shows the rate of home ownership by time of arrival for foreign born groups in South Bethlehem in 1910. By 1910 57% of those foreign born immigrants who had arrived in America before 1890 were owners rather than renters.

Amongst those who entered America between 1890-1900, 45% owned their homes. In contrast, of those who arrived in America after 1900, only 9% and 3% respectively, owned rather than rented.

Table 32. Home Ownership by Time of Arrival, for all Immigrants, and Germans, Italians, and Slavs 1910.

<u>Home Ownership</u>				
<u>Time of Arrival</u>	<u>Germans</u>	<u>Italians</u>	<u>Slavs</u>	<u>Total</u>
Before 1890	81.3	100.0	42.9	57.4
1890-1899	90.0	50.0	30.8	45.1
1900-1904			9.4	9.3
1905-1910	25.0		1.8	2.7
Percentage				26.3
Number				61

Germans Chi-Square 19.62 P .01
 Italians Chi-Square 6.65 P .08
 Slavic Chi-Square 22.86 P .01
 All groups Chi-Square 65.26 P .04

Source: Sample Data 1910

When the rate of ownership for individual foreign born groups was examined by time of arrival only the findings for the Germans, Italians and Slavs were significant, once again demonstrating that the longer the tenure in America, the higher the rate of ownership was likely to be. The pattern was most clear amongst the Slavic immigrants in South Bethlehem. Amongst the Slavs, 43% of those who had arrived prior to 1890 were home owners by 1910. Amongst those who arrived between 1890-1900 the

rate of ownership dropped to 31%. For those who arrived after 1900, that is between 1900 and 1904 and 1905 and 1910 the rate of ownership fell to 9 and then 4%, respectively.

Thus, it is clear that time of arrival did help determine the rate of ownership amongst the foreign born, and at least partially explained the disparity in ownership between the Irish and Germans and the later arriving Italians, Slavs and Austrians. Other studies have shown that during the first decades of the twentieth century, rates of ownership amongst ethnic groups in other communities continued to increase. Between 1910 and 1940 Joseph Barton has shown that ownership rates reached 69 and 80 percent, respectively, for Italians and Slovaks who were upwardly mobile from blue collar origins, and 59 and 65 percent, respectively, for those remaining in the blue collar class.⁹ By 1950, Bodnar, Simon and Weber found that over half of Pittsburgh's Polish Hill and over 60 percent of the Italian-Americans in the Bloomfield section of the city owned rather than rented.¹⁰ In Philadelphia, Caroline Golab found that by the 1930's rates of ownership in Polish neighborhoods varied

between 66 and 75 percent.¹¹ Given the increase in ownership rates in other communities it is likely that in subsequent decades rates of ownership amongst South Bethlehem's youngest and most recent immigrant arrivals would also increase.

In conclusion, in 1880 immigrants exhibited nuclear and extended, rather than augmented families. With the subsequent industrial and demographic expansion of the community the practise of keeping boarders became far more common amongst all members of the community. The income derived from boarders was most likely used to help support the family of young, recently arrived immigrants, and to help meet mortgage payments of older, earlier arriving, immigrant home owners. Therefore, family structure and home ownership, as in the development of ethnic communities, was the result of the interaction of ethnicity, occupation, and the urban structure at the immigrants time of arrival.

End Notes

1. Tamara Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time xi-xii, 1-5, 207-212; Yans-McLaughlin, Family and Community, 18-28; Herbert Gutman, Power and Culture, 256-259.
2. John Bodnar, et al., Journal of American History, "Migration, Kinship, and Urban Adjustment: Blacks and Poles in Pittsburgh, 1900-1930", 66 (1975), 548-565.
3. Mark Stolarik, Growing up on the Southside, 27-8.
4. Robert G. Barrow, 'Beyond the Tenement: Patterns of American Urban Housing, 1870-1930,' Journal of Urban History, 9 (August, 1983), 402-18; Daniel Luria, 'Wealth, Capital and Power: The Social Meaning of Home Ownership,' Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 7 (Autumn 1976), 278; Stephen Thernstrom, Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1964, 117.
5. Stephen Thernstrom, Poverty and Progress, 156-7; Zunz, The Changing Face of Inequality, 152-3.
6. John Bodnar et al., Lives of Their Own, 156-159.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Joseph Barton, Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians and Slovaks in an American City, 1890-1950, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975, 101-104, 118-19, 122-9.
10. John Bodnar, et al., Lives of Their Own, 256.
11. Caroline Golab, Immigrant Destinations, Philadelphia, 1977, 69-70, 153-4.

Conclusion

Immigrants to South Bethlehem during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were not the uprooted aliens depicted by Oscar Handlin. Rather than suffering swift breakdown and subsequent assimilation immigrants in South Bethlehem, as in other small Pennsylvania steel towns, adapted to their new urban and industrial environment by developing ethnic communities.

During this period South Bethlehem shared a number of structural characteristics with Johnstown and Steelton: all three were similar in age, size, the extent and character of their industrial development, ethnic composition, and topography. They were young, small towns, heavily reliant on the production of iron and steel. The original inhabitants of the city, and

thus the work force in the mill, were native Americans, Irish, and German immigrants. As the iron and steel industry expanded during the late nineteenth century they were later joined by central, southern, and eastern Europeans.

The occupational hierarchy and urban structure to which such later immigrants would have to adapt was already apparent by 1880. The native Americans, Germans, and Irish of South Bethlehem each occupied a distinctive place in this hierarchy and were clustered in certain wards of the borough. The native Americans, who constituted approximately forty percent of the population in 1880, dominated the white collar and skilled occupational categories, and resided in adjacent Fountain Hill and Wards 1 and 2 of the borough. The Irish immigrants, who also constituted approximately forty percent of the population, were concentrated in unskilled and semiskilled occupations in the employ of the iron company and railroad, and resided in Wards 2 and 3. The German immigrants, who composed approximately ten percent of the population, and had arrived after the Irish, occupied an intermediary position in the occupational hierarchy and urban

structure of the borough. They displayed a higher proportion of white collar and skilled workers than did the more numerous Irish, and resided in Ward 2 in close proximity to the native Americans. Regardless of the differences in occupational status, employment, or residence all three groups demonstrated an overwhelming tendency towards nuclear rather than extended families and rarely kept boarders.

By 1910 South Bethlehem had expanded considerably in both area and population, with most of the new inhabitants arriving from central, southern and eastern Europe. By that time the native Americans, Irish and German immigrants, were on average at a later stage in the life cycle and more were home owners. Nonetheless their occupational status, industrial employment, and residential patterns remained largely unchanged, with the exception of a slight increase in occupational status of the Germans and Irish, and expansion of the Irish into Ward 4 and 5. The Slavs had become the largest single immigrant group in the city by 1910. Such new immigrants usually worked as unskilled and semiskilled laborers in the steel industry and clustered in the recently incorporated Wards 4 and 5 of the

borough. Due to their youth and recent arrival few Slavs had sufficient resources to buy a home, as a consequence most rented their homes and took on boarders in order to supplement their family income.

Thus, the respective immigrant groups in South Bethlehem came to share more than just common origins. They also worked for the same company, resided in the same neighborhoods, worshipped in the same churches and shared common life styles. It was such conditions, regardless of the particular ethnic group or their respective time of arrival, which fostered the development of ethnic communities, the principal form of immigrant adaption in urban America.

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